

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL PREPARATION/SUBMISSION

The following information is intended to serve only as a guide to aid in the preparation of your proposal. Obviously, it is not all inclusive.

DO's --

Do make your proposal easy to read; write simply and concisely.

Do include an index, table of contents, and other tabs, dividers, etc.:

- to organize your proposal more clearly,
- to facilitate the evaluators in determining acceptability/viability of what is proposed, and
- to facilitate administration of the awarded contracts.

Do invest in a copy/subscription of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR).

Do become familiar with the FAR.

Do ask the Government Contracting Officer to provide you with full-text copies of any FAR/Department of Treasury Acquisition Regulation (DTAR)/Internal Revenue Service Acquisition Procedure (IRSAP) provisions and clauses that you do not have or are not familiar with.

Do understand the standard clauses in the FAR related to technical data rights if you're selling Information Technology (IT) resources to the Government.

Do provide published technical documentation for the products proposed. Do make sure that any technical documentation you provide includes any relevant technical specifications to include:

- technical "footprint",
- power requirements,
- cooling requirements,
- compatibility requirements.

Do include a separate "tab" within your proposal listing and detailing any exceptions/conditions you have taken to the Government's requirements. This includes any exceptions taken to pricing terms, technical requirements, and contract terms and conditions. Follow the Contracting Officer's instructions in determining where such exceptions should be placed in the proposal volumes.

Do include a clear, well-written glossary to explain terms included in the proposal. Do not assume that the Government defines a term the same way that you do. Do not assume that everybody understands the "industry" definition.

Do limit your use of "boilerplate", boilerplate language should be used judiciously; make sure it applies.

Do ask. Do review the solicitation and take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions. Do submit your questions in writing, particularly in competitive acquisitions. Do expect a response from the Contracting Officer in writing (amendment to the solicitation). Do point out any contradictions, ambiguities, or errors in the Government's solicitation/requirements.

Do review very carefully any proposal instructions included in the cover letter to the solicitation (single/sole source acquisitions) or in Sections B, L, and M (competitive acquisitions). Follow the instructions closely. If the instructions do not make sense, ask the Contracting Officer.

Do call the Contracting Officer at the beginning of a sole source acquisition. After initial contact, play it by ear; do not call the Contracting Officer daily/weekly/monthly just to keep in touch. If there is a contract specialist, then always call the specialist first. Do not call a technical evaluator/COTR without the express permission/direction from the Contracting Officer/contract specialist. Do call the Contracting Officer (or Branch supervisor) if there is a problem you cannot resolve with the specialist.

Do read all of the solicitation. Do make sure your proposal writers understand the complete Government requirements and the complete solicitation. Do make sure your proposal writer "cross-references" appropriately to provide correspondence among proposal sections. For example, make sure everything proposed in the technical proposal has been priced in the section B Contract Line Item Number (CLIN) sheets.

Do be clear in what you are proposing. Sole source negotiations may allow some flexibility and alternate proposals but competitive acquisitions will generally not allow alternate proposals. Section L should include the specific conditions under which the Government will allow alternate proposals. Do not use an approach whereby you ask the Government to make a decision and provide feedback to you in a competitive acquisition. For example, do not indicate that you can provide WordPerfect or, if the Government prefers, MultiMate. Do not expect the Government to "help" you in a competitive environment.

Do understand the differences between negotiated procurements and sealed bidding procedures. Do not expect to negotiate or have discussions (written or oral) in sealed bidding. Do not expect a "bid opening" in negotiated procurements.

Do respect the Contracting Officer's silence during "quiet times" in a competitive acquisition. Do not push when a Contracting Officer says that the information cannot be provided; do not push when a technical representative says that all communications must go through the Contracting Officer. Do not ask the small business specialist to get information that the Contracting Officer will not give you.

Do understand the terms "technical leveling" and "technical infusion". Do not expect the Contracting Officer to give you information about your competitor's proposal. Do not engage in fishing expeditions with your Contracting Officer.

Do ask the Contracting Officer for a "soft" copy of the solicitation. Do make suggestions to the Contracting Officer that would make submissions easier. For example, in sole source actions, transmit electronic copies of documents back/forth (minus the virus, please) to facilitate incorporation of terms into the contract.

Do provide "sanitized" cost proposals in competitive actions to facilitate review by the technical evaluators in performing "crosstalk" analysis by the technical evaluation panel. However, include only those columns on the spreadsheets that would be appropriate for technical evaluators to review, i.e., CLIN, product make/model, series/version, installation dates, quantities, etc. Those columns used strictly for life cycle costing in the price evaluation may not be needed for the sanitized price proposal -- check with the Contracting Officer.

Do include information on your SBA business development specialist in the proposal. Do not play games with the Contracting Officer about your 8(a) eligibility.

DON'Ts --

Do not fill your proposal with "the history of the corporation, parts I & II". Stick to the requirements in the statement of work.

Do not fill your proposal with marketing hype. Do not hesitate to ask the Contracting Officer to clarify anything that you do not understand. Do ask again if you still do not understand the Government's answer.

Do not expect the Contracting Officer to accept a "late proposal". Know the rules in the FAR related to late proposals. Know what the closing date is for the solicitation and make sure your proposal is in the contract specialist/Contracting Officer's hands before the closing date/time.

Do not assume that the Government will accept "commercial paper" for incorporation into the contract. This includes standard warranties and standard software agreements. Review the solicitation requirements very carefully to determine if the standard warranties, etc. meet the Government's requirements prior to proposing their incorporation into a contract. (In a competitive acquisition, a proposal that suggests the use of a standard warranty in lieu of meeting the Government's maintenance requirements could be eliminated from the competition as a deficient proposal).

Do not expect the Government evaluator to accept a simple statement of compliance such as "XYZ Corporation will meet the requirement" without providing some "proof" of the compliance.

Do not make changes to the contract/solicitation at the COTR/technical representative/evaluator's direction. The Government requirement may only be officially changed by the Contracting Officer. Do not assume a contract change will be approved/implemented by a Contracting Officer. The risk can be expensive and it may be yours alone.

Do not include extra options in competitive acquisition. Do not assume that the Government will accept any unsolicited options in any acquisition.

Do not include "unpriced" options in your proposal.

Do not propose/price "contingencies" in your proposal. In a sole/single source action, do talk to the contract specialist or Contracting Officer about any contingencies you feel you need to include and follow the resultant contract. In competitive actions, do understand that "contingent" proposals could eliminate the proposal from the competition.